

1917.7327

STAR

1984

c.3

12956205

Starved rock

STATE PARK

RECORDS DOCUMENTS

NOV 27 1985

ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY



STARVED ROCK

Starved Rock State Park is located along the south side of the Illinois River, one mile south of Utica, midway between the cities of LaSalle-Peru and Ottawa.

The Park derived its name from an Indian legend that originated during the 1760's. Pontiac, chief of the Ottawa Tribe which lived upriver from this area, was murdered by an Illinois Indian while he attended a tribal council in southern Illinois. A series of battles followed to avenge the death of the chief. The Potawatomi tribe, allies of the Ottawa tribe, fought a band of the Illinois in the area now known as Starved Rock State Park. Finally, according to the legend, the Illiniwek took refuge on top of the 125' high small sandstone butte and were surrounded by the Ottawa-Potawatomi tribes and eventually starved. Hence the name Starved Rock.

HISTORY

Indian Influence: Archaeologists report there is evidence that Archaic Indians lived within the park from 8000-900 B.C. During the following centuries the area was inhabited by the Hopewellian, Woodland and Mississippian Indian cultures. Village sites and burial mounds have been mapped by archaeologists within the park.

The best known and possibly largest group of Indians to live in this area were the Illinois Indians. It is believed the Illinois or Illiniwek lived in this area from the 1500's to the 1700's. This tribe of 5,000-10,000 Indians were divided into sub-tribes. The Kaskaskias were a sub-tribe who had their village extending along the north bank of the river directly across from this park.

French Influence: In August 1673, five French "Voyageurs" led by explorer Louis Joliet and accompanied by Father Jacques Marquette became the first known Europeans to enter this area. They canoed up the Illinois River from the Mississippi and stopped at the Kaskaskia village. Two years later Fr. Marquette returned to the Kaskaskia village and founded the Mission of Immaculate Conception, Illinois' first Christian mission.

Several years later, René' Robert Cavelier Sieur de LaSalle and his Lieutenant Henri de Tonti claimed the Mississippi Valley for France. Their objective was to build a chain of forts to confine the English colonies to the east coast. They built Fort

St. Louis on top of Starved Rock in the winter of 1682-83. It commanded a strategic position as it towered above the last rapids in the Illinois River, thereby controlling a main passage from Canada to the south. Indians settled in great numbers near the fort to gain protection from the feared Iroquois Tribe, and to be near a source of French trade goods.

In the early 1700's while the Iroquois continued to raid in the Illinois country, King Louis XIV of France suspended trading rights on the frontier. The Illinois decided to move south to Peoria for better hunting grounds and to escape the Iroquois raids. The French followed the Illiniwek to Peoria, where they built Fort Pimitoui. Fort St. Louis was then used as a refuge by traders and trappers until it was destroyed by fire around 1720.

Recent History: During the 1800's there was a plan to make Starved Rock the 'Gibraltar of the West'. This venture was unsuccessful but the site was later developed as a vacation area complete with artesian fed swimming pool, dance pavilion and hotel. In 1911 the state purchased Starved Rock and adjacent acreage in order to develop a state park. Today the park has grown to 2630 acres and is bordered by a 582 acre Nature Preserve to the west.

NATURAL FEATURES

Geology: Starved Rock State Park is well known for its interesting rock formations. The formations are primarily of St. Peter's Sandstone which was laid down by a huge shallow inland sea over 425,000,000 years ago. These sedimentary rocks are formed by the consolidation of sediment for thousands of years at the bottom of the sea.

This sandstone was later brought to the surface as a result of a huge upfold known as the LaSalle Anticline. The continual erosion of the surface during the intervening years has formed the flat surface of this general area.

Most of this flat land was glaciated several times during the past 700,000 years. A flat and gently rolling plain resulted and prairie formed after the last glacier. Most of the former prairie is now rich central Illinois farmland. The areas along the river and its tributaries are still predominately forest.

The Illinois River Valley is a major exception to this flat land in the Starved Rock area. The valley was formed by a series of floods as glacial meltwaters

broke through moraines sending torrents of water surging across the land. The river eroded the sandstone and other sedimentary rocks to its present level.

The park's 18 canyons were formed as streams feeding to the Illinois River eroded through the glacial drift and into the sandstone. These streams cut channels through the rock as they followed the cracks and lines of weakness in the sedimentary rock. Waterfalls and vertical walls were formed as streams cut through rocks of varying resistance. Small streams are still cutting through the soft bedrock today.

During the early spring when the winter thaw is occurring and rains are frequent, waterfalls of varying sizes are found at the heads of all 18 canyons. After a good summer rain the most popular and lasting waterfalls are found in St. Louis, French, LaSalle and Ottawa Canyons. The falls in St. Louis Canyon are spring fed and flow throughout the summer.

There are no true caves in the park but undercuts and cave-like depressions can be found in the sandstone throughout the area. An overhang results from the undercutting of a cliff by the river, a stream or waterfall. The largest of these is Council Overhang, located at the east end of the park.

Plants and Animals: Starved Rock has a wide range of plant life, due in part to the geology and glacial history. This wide range of food and shelter leads to an abundant wildlife population.

The porous sandstone bluffs allow water to soak quickly through, only to collect in greater quantities on the slopes below. Red oak, basswood and sugar maples are found on moist sandy soils of north facing slopes. Woodchucks that feed on the lush undergrowth, and moles that eat insects found as they tunnel, burrow into this type of moist sandy soil. Vireos and catbirds may be seen flying above the carpet of ferns and shrubs such as witch hazel and wild hydrangea in search of crawling insects. Trillium, dutchmen's breeches and the large, white flower of the may apple are often seen in the spring. Tall, slender, purple flowered spider-worts and the delicate five petaled, five branched bouquets of flowering spurge bloom as summer continues.

Cottonwoods, black willows and ash trees are common along the Illinois River floodplain. Skunk cabbage, marsh marigolds and wild iris are found

in the marshy areas in spring. Wood ducks that nest in hollow trees can occasionally be seen paddling along the river's edge. Evidence of beaver and muskrats, water dependent animals, can be seen as one walks along the River Trail.

The canyon vegetation is limited to lower orders of plant life because most plants cannot become rooted on the steep rock walls. Blue-green lichens, mosses and ribbon-like liverworts prepare the way for ferns and flowering plants such as the delicate blue hare bell. The upside down growing american yew, an inhabitant of the far north, is also found in the cool canyon interiors. Rough winged swallows and rock doves can be seen perching on the rock walls. Frogs, toads and salamanders seek out the cool, moist canyon floors.

Black oak, red cedar and white oak grow on the drier sandy bluff tops. In addition, white pines and white cedar are found, brought this far south by the glaciers. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers drill parallel rows of small holes on cedar trees, and return to feed on sap and small insects. Shrubs that prefer a well drained area are serviceberry and northern honeysuckle. Scarlet tanagers and cedar waxwings feed on their berries. The magenta blooms of shooting star and the nodding orange columbine are along the pathways in spring. As summer wears on yellow partridge pea, violet spiked leadplant and purple, square stemmed mint plants appear. Chipmunks, fox and grey squirrels can be seen scampering in the forest gathering seeds and nuts.

Bur oaks and hickories predominate away from bluffs in deeper soils. Typical plants characteristic of the forest floor include the dwarf blueberry, american hazelnut, black huckleberry, and the bracken fern. Nuthatches and chickadees feed on nuts, seeds and insects found in the bark of trees. Jack-in-the-pulpits, the many-petaled, pastel colored hepatica and delicate pink spring beauties blossom in spring in the shaded moist soil. Brown eyed susans and pink spiked tick-trefoils will bloom in summer where the sun breaks through the canopy of trees. Racoons and flying squirrels

spend many hours searching for and gathering berries and nuts.

At the forest edge bright blue indigo buntings flit through the wild crab apples and plums that skirt the former glacial till prairie. Cottontail rabbits scamper through the bluestem and Indian grasses. In the sandy prairie soil prickly pear cactus is found in addition to lead plant, compass plant and rattlesnake master. Whitetailed deer come to much on the sumac. Redtailed hawks soar overhead in search of voles and field mice.

The poison-ivy plant is found in all areas of the park. The white berries often seen on this plant are a prime source of food for birds.

ACTIVITIES

Hiking: Starved Rock has 20 miles of well marked hiking trails. Extensive hiking information is available at the Visitor Center and park office. Trails are open year round but hikers must exercise caution near bluffs and stay on official park trails. Following unmarked trails, camping in unauthorized areas, rappelling and rock climbing contribute to the destruction of canyon bluffs and other natural areas; violators are subject to fine. Unmarked areas are dangerous, numerous people have been seriously injured in this park. The official trails take hikers to areas best able to withstand man's presence.

Metal trail maps are located at all trail access points, trail intersections and points of interest to give hikers an accurate idea of their location. There are colored dots along the trails on trees to assist hikers. These dots match the trail colors on the metal map signs, and correspond to letter symbols on this trail map.

River Trail — R: Red on map and trees.

Bluff Trail — B: Brown on map and trees.

Interior Canyon Trails — I: Green on map and trees.

Connecting Trails — C: Green on map and trees.

There are also yellow dots on trees going away from the lodge, park office, main parking lot C, Visitor Center and Starved Rock. White dots on trees mean hikers are returning to these areas. For your own safety be off trails by dark.

Picnicking: Picnic tables, drinking water, toilets, litter cans and metal grills are provided at no charge.

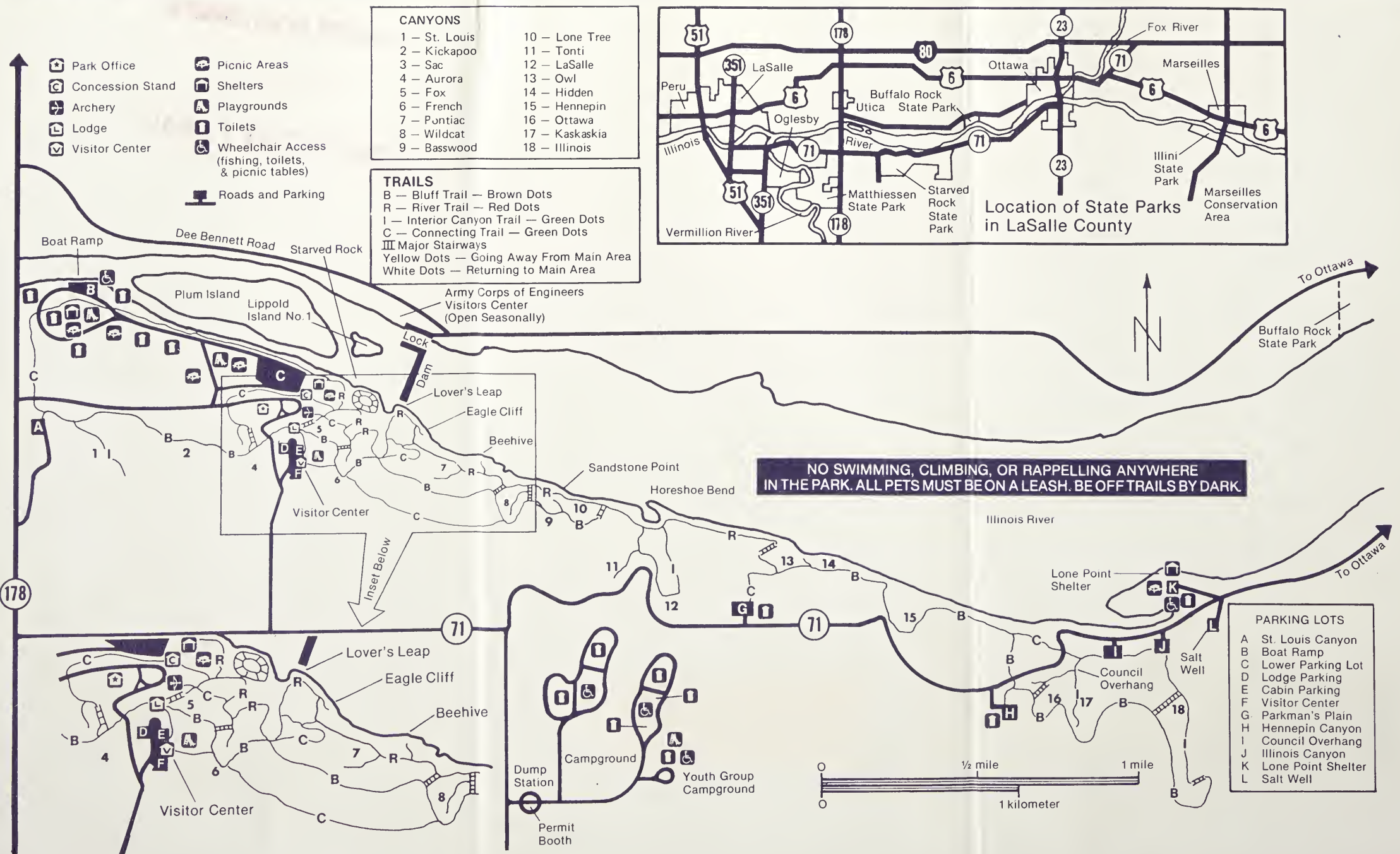
PLEASE — Under no circumstances should anyone enter the river to wade or swim at any point. Boats are not allowed within 600' above or below the dam. Especially hazardous undertows are prevalent in the area between the dam and Starved Rock. In addition, swimming or wading is not allowed in any of the canyons or from any park shore. Many people have drowned in these areas. Such tragedies are unnecessary — stay out of the water!

Fishing: Fishing is generally good but fishermen must stay 600' from the dam. Many fish can be caught in the Illinois River including: channel catfish from between the lock and dam, bullheads from the seawall, white bass from both ends of Plum Island, sauger and walleye from below the dam in fast water, carp from both banks and crappie around the small Lippold Island.

Boating: Boats may be launched from the boat ramp at the west end of the park. There are canoe and john boat rentals in this area.

Winter Sports: An ice skating area is available at parking lot C.

Cross country skiing and snowshoeing are available in the picnic area and at Matthiessen State Park. There is no rental equipment. Tobogganing and sledding is possible east of parking lot C. Heated washrooms are accessible from these areas. Snowmobiling is not allowed anywhere in the park. Weather conditions may necessitate the closing of park roads.



FACILITIES

I917.7327

STAR

1984

C.3

Visitor Center: Displays at the center relate the visitor to the park's cultural and natural history. The park interpreter posts a weekly schedule of activities and hours. Generally the center is open on weekend afternoons during peak visitor seasons. Schools and other organized groups may arrange reservations for volunteer work projects. Contact the center at 815/667-4906 or write to Park Interpreter, Starved Rock State Park, Box 116, Utica, Illinois 61373. If the Visitor Center is closed, information may be obtained at the park office which is open daily from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Camping: The campground is open most of the year, however it may be closed during winter or spring thaw due to road conditions. Camping permits may be obtained at the permit booth in the campground or park office. The campground has 133 sites available. All sites have electrical hook-ups, water is located throughout the area; showers are not available. Organized youth groups camp in a separate youth group area by reservation.

Horseback Riding and Camping: There are horseback riding trails and a horseback riders' campground along Highway 71 in the far western portion of the park. There are horse rentals available on Rt. 71, 1/2 mile west of Rt. 178.

Lodge: The stone and log lodge, built in part by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's, is situated on a high bluff just southwest of Starved Rock. The lodge offers 45 rooms that reflect a peaceful atmosphere of yesteryear. The rustic lounge has a large double fireplace. The pine-paneled dining room is available for public and private use. During warmer months the Pow-Wow Room in the lodge basement serves refreshments. The Starved Rock Meeting Room can accommodate small or large groups.

In addition to the lodge there are 12 cabins and Teepee House; all complete with baths, air conditioning and connecting asphalt pathways. Lodging is available year round. Those wishing reservations for rooms, cabins or dining should call 815/667-4211 or write Starved Rock Lodge, P.O. Box 471, Utica, Illinois 61373.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Groups of 25 or more persons will not be admitted to any state site unless permission from the site superintendent has been obtained to use the facilities. In addition, groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous state sites are within easy access of every part of Illinois. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette and Giant City; White Pines Forest has cabins and dining rooms only, and Black Hawk has dining rooms only. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

Most state sites are open year round, except on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to facilities is by foot only.

For more details on this site, contact the Site Superintendent, Starved Rock State Park, Box 116, Utica, IL 61373, phone (815) 667-4726. For information on other land and historic sites, write the Illinois Department of Conservation, Land and Historic Sites, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62706.



**Illinois
Department of
Conservation**
life and land together

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 122557330

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois
Issued by
Lands & Historic Sites

25M-3-84

The Department of Conservation is an Equal Opportunity Employer.